

AGN. NO. \_\_\_\_\_

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH AND  
SUPERVISOR ZEV YAROSLAVSKY

August 4, 2009

**AMENDMENT TO ITEM #2**  
**PREVENTING CHILD FATALITIES BY EXPANDING MEDICAL HUB ASSESSMENTS**

The welfare and overall well-being of children is, first and foremost, the responsibility of their birth parents. When birth parents endanger their children, child welfare must become the shared responsibility of all County departments, non-County agencies and community-based partners serving families.

Through motions on June 24, 2008, May 26, 2009 and June 30, 2009, this Board unanimously directed the Chief Executive Officer to progressively expand, enhance and ensure full utilization of the County's Family and Child Index (FCI). FCI is a centralized database that ties together basic data about families and children who, through relevant contact with participating public agencies, have been identified as at-risk for abuse and neglect. However, consistent specialized medical and mental health assessments of certain at-risk children and families **must** also occur to adequately identify and prevent child endangerment and/or death.

Two recent child fatalities have raised, among other issues, significant concerns about whether children under investigation for suspected child abuse are being assessed consistently by medical and mental health professionals. In many instances, the child's family chooses the local medical or mental health professional who will provide an expert opinion to the Department of Children and Family Services during the early stages of a child abuse investigation. These clinicians may or may not have the necessary experience or expertise in interviewing abused and neglected children or in detecting the child abuse propensities of the parents or caregivers with whom the child remains during the course of the investigation.

**M O R E**

**MOTION**

MOLINA \_\_\_\_\_

RIDLEY-THOMAS \_\_\_\_\_

YAROSLAVSKY \_\_\_\_\_

ANTONOVICH \_\_\_\_\_

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## AMENDMENT TO ITEM #2 - PREVENTING CHILD FATALITIES BY EXPANDING MEDICAL HUB ASSESSMENTS

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Currently, within the network of County-run Medical Hubs, forensically-trained doctors assess the medical and mental health needs of children newly-detained from their birth families for substantiated abuse and neglect. The recent tragedies have revealed the need to further expand the criteria for a Medical Hub assessment to also include a select number children who remain in the homes of their birth parents while a child abuse investigation is underway. This will allow forensically-trained child abuse experts to assess the family holistically, in the best interest of the child.

**WE, THEREFORE, MOVE,** that in addition to the pilot to be administered at the LAC+USC East San Gabriel Valley Medical Hub as proposed in today's Board agenda item #2, the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Officer, in conjunction with the Departments of Children and Family Services, Health and Mental Health, to report back in 30 days on:

1. Whether an expansion of Medical Hub capacity countywide to accommodate the assessment of the specific non-detained children meets the criteria for Katie A. funding. If so;
2. The development of policies, procedures and standardized criteria to identify the non-detained children, including those in the early child abuse investigation stage, who should receive forensic medical and mental health assessments through Medical Hubs; and
3. The development of a protocol and process by which County-contracted health clinics can refer requests for forensic child abuse examinations to the Medical Hubs.

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MDA:hbb

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